

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3453

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FOR IO--MAYNES ONLY FROM GABRIEL GUERRA

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: UNGA
SUBJ: COMMITTEE OF 24 -- PUERTO RICO

1. PURSUANT TO YOUR REQUEST, YOU WILL FIND BELOW MY PERSONAL COMMENTS, WHICH ARE BASICALLY THE SAME I RELAYED TO YOU LAST FRIDAY, AUGUST 19, BEFORE MY DEPARTURE FOR THE CARIBBEAN.

2. FROM AUGUST 12-16, I WAS IN NEW YORK IN IO/UCS BUSINESS. AT THAT TIME, AS YOU KNOW, THE COMMITTEE OF 24 OF THE UN WAS AGAIN CONSIDERING THE PUERTO RICAN SITUATION. THIS TIME, HOWEVER, THE SITUATION HAS DRAMATICALLY CHANGED FROM ANY OTHER YEAR THAT THE COMMITTEE HAS CONSIDERED PUERTO RICO. (SEE MY MEMORANDUM OF EARLY AUGUST TO FORMER DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR IO, BAKER, THROUGH GEORGE DALLEY, ON THE SUBJECT MATTER--ENTITLED "AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S VISIT TO PUERTO RICO.")

3. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE COMMITTEE AND PUERTO RICO'S HISTORY, REPS FROM THE THREE IDEOLOGICAL SECTORS OF PUERTO RICO, REQUESTED TO BE HEARD BEFORE THE COMMITTEE: INDEPENDENCE, STATEHOOD AND COMMONWEALTH BELIEVERS. BASICALLY ALL THREE EXPONENTS, NUMBERING ABOUT 25, STATED THAT PUERTO RICO WAS COLONY OF THE U.S. PRIOR TO THIS DATE, ONLY THE INDEPENDENCE FACTIONS IN PUERTO RICO HAD

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APPEARED BEFORE THE COMMITTEE. THIS NEW DEVELOPMENT, THEREFORE, CHANGES THE WHOLE POLITICAL SITUATION IN PUERTO RICO, THE U.S. AND THE U.N. AND CREATES DIFFERENT POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS. REPERCUSSIONS WHICH THE U.S. NEEDS TO ADDRESS ITSELF TO, SINCE THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN PUERTO RICO AND THE U.S. HAS DRAMATICALLY CHANGED SINCE NOVEMBER 1976.

4. WITH THE VICTORY OF PRESIDENT CARTER AND GOVERNOR ROMERO BARCELO, NEW POLITICAL FORCES HAVE BEEN UNLEASHED IN PUERTO RICO WHICH HAVE A DIRECT BEARING TO WHAT OCCURRED LAST WEEK AT THE U.N. THE COMMONWEALTH BELIEVERS (POPULAR DEMOCRATIC PARTY) BY LOSING THE ELECTIONS IN 1976, ARE IN THE PROCESS OF REORGANIZING THEMSELVES, REDIRECTING THEIR STRATEGIES AND THEREFORE, GOING THROUGH AN INTERNAL POLITICAL IDEOLOGICAL STRUGGLE. THE PARTY IS SPLIT AMONG THOSE WHO FAVOR THE CONTINUATION OF THE STATUS QUO AND THOSE THAT WANT COMPLETE AUTONOMY FROM THE U.S. WITHIN THE CON-FINES OF RESOLUTION 1541 OF THE U.N. THE STATUS QUO FORCES ARE LED BY FORMER GOVERNOR HERNANDEZ COLON, PRESIDENT OF THE PDP. THE DISSENTING FORCES ARE LED BY MARCOS RIGAU (A YOUNG, AGGRESSIVE MEMBER OF THE RULING COUNCIL OF THE PDP, WITH STRONG FOLLOWING AMONG THE RULING MEMBERS OF THE PDP) AND SEVEN COLBERG (MINORITY LEADER OF THE LOCAL HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, AN OLDER, EquALLY AGGRESSIVE MEMBER OF THE PDP, WITH STRONG FOLLOWING AMONG ALL PDP MEMBERS FOR HIS SLASHING TONGUE AND ACERBIC COMMENTS AGAINST THE PRESENT GOVERNOR AND STATEHOOD). BOTH RIGAU AND COLBERG TESTIFIED BEFORE THE COMMITTEE OF 24, IN THEIR PRIVATE CAPACITY. THEIR APPEARANCE BEFORE THE COMMITTEE HAS CREATED HAVOC BOTH IN PUERTO RICO AND THE U.S. (SEE WASHINGTON POST STORY AUG. 19 AND EDITORIAL AUG. 20). THEIR APPEARANCE HAS STRENGTHENED CONFIDENTIAL

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THEIR POLITICAL POWER WITHIN THE PDP.

5. THE MAJOR STATEHOOD FORCES WHICH APPEARED BEFORE THE COMMITTEE OF 24 WERE: FRANKLIN DELANO LOPEZ AND JUAN MANUEL GARCIA PASSALACQUA, WHICH TESTIFIED ON BEHALF OF THE PUERTO RICAN CHAPTER OF AMERICANS FOR DEMOCRATIC ACTION (ADA), MAYOR MAURICE FERRE OF MIAMI (THE ONLY PUERTO RICAN MAYOR IN MAINLAND US) AND REV. RUBEN CRUZ, FROM CHICAGO, ILLINOIS (A COLUMNIST FOR THE CHICAGO SUN TIMES AND A WEEKLY TV PROGRAM IN LOCAL ABC). LOPEZ AND GARCIA PASSALACQUA ARE DEMOCRATS FOR STATEHOOD, EARLY CARTER SUPPORTERS (NOV. 1975), CAMPAIGN WORKERS DURING CARTER'S PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN, AND WITH STRONG TIES WITH KEY PERSONS IN THE WHITE HOUSE (E.G. JORDAN, KRAFT, EIZENSTADT). THEY ARE PRESENTLY UNDERGOING AN INTENSIVE POLITICAL FIGHT WITH FORMER GOVERNOR HERNANDEZ COLON IN ORDER TO DETERMINE WHICH GROUP (PDP OR ADA) WILL CONTROL THE LOCAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY IN PUERTO RICO. THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE HAS CONSTITUTED A COMMITTEE OF FIVE MEMBERS TO SUPERVISE AN ISLAND-WIDE ELECTION TO BE HELD NEXT YEAR, WHICH WILL DETERMINE WHICH OF THE TWO FACTIONS WILL CONTROL THE LOCAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY. (THEY WILL BE THE FIRST ELEC-

TIONS EVER TO BE HELD IN PUERTO RICO WHERE PUERTO RICO WILL VOTE IN MAINLAND US PARTISAN POLITICS).
MAYOR FERRE, BY BEING A SMART, INFLUENTIAL, ATTRACTIVE POLITICIAN, ADDS TO THE NEW POLITICAL SITUATION WHICH OCCURRED IN THE UN. HE IS A DEMOCRAT, WITH STRONG TIES WITH KEY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS (E.G. SENATORS JACKSON, KENNEDY, CHILES, STONE, MOYNIHAN AND CONGRESSMEN FARELL, PEPPER, BADILLO--TO NAME A FEW), THE WHITE HOUSE (VICE-PRESIDENT MONDALE), STATE DEPARTMENT (UNDERSECRETARY HABIB). BY BEING PUERTO RICAN AND MAYOR OF MIAMI, HE SURPRISED THE CUBAN DELEGATION, SINCE HIS COMMENTS WERE ANTI-COLONIAL AND RELATIVELY MILD IN HIS ATTACK ON CUBA AND FIDEL CASTRO, CONSIDERING HE IS RUNNING FOR RE-ELECTION IN NOV. 1977 AND MIAMI, AS YOUKNOWN, IS A STRONG
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EXILED CUBAN STRONGHOLD. THE CUBAN DELEGATION, DURING CONVERSATIONS IN THE DELEGATE LOUNGE OF THE UN AND THEN COMMENTS I HEARD FROM THE PUERTO RICAN GROUP, WERE SURPRISED BY HIS STATEMENT AND APPEARANCE.

6. THE MOOD AMONG ALL PUERTO RICANS DURING THESE DAYS WAS ONE OF CAMARADERIE. THEY WERE ALL THERE FOR ONE PURPOSE, TO AIR THE VIEW ABOUT PUERTO RICO'S COLONIAL SITUATION, IRRESPECTIVE OF WHETHER THEY WERE FOR COMMONWEALTH, INDEPENDENCE OR STATEHOOD. THIS FEELING OF UNITY WAS STRONG AND EASILY OBSERVABLE. MANY MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE WERE SURPRISED TO SEE THIS UNANIMITY, E.G. CUBANS, CHINESE, YUGOSLAVS, NORWEGIANS, AUSTRALIANS, RUSSIANS. THE CHINESE, WHICH ABSTAINED LAST YEAR, TOOK A STRONG STAND IN FAVOR OF THE PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE. THE CUBANS PRESENTED AN EQUALY STRONG POSITION AS THEY HAVE ALWAYS DONE BY INTRODUCING THEIR RESOLUTIN, EVEN THOUGH MANY PEOPLE AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT THOUGHT THEY WOULD NOT, DUE TO THE ONGOING CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN OUR GOVERNMENT AND THE CUBAN GOVERNMENT; THE NORWEGIANS AND AUSTRALIANS WERE CONFUSED AS TO THE NEW PERSONS WHICH WERE TESTIFYING FROM THE COMMONWEALTH AND STATEHOOD SIDE.

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FOR IO-MAYNES ONLY FROM GABRIEL GUERRA

7. THE TWO TRADITIONAL INDEPENDENT GROUPS, THE PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE PARTY (PIP) AND THE PUERTO RICAN SOCIALIST PARTY (PSP) WERE THERE AS THEY HAVE BEEN APPEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE FOR MANY YEARS. THEY WERE EQUALLY SURPRISED TO SEE SO MANY OTHER GROUPS TESTIFYING, SPECIALLY THE COMMONWEALTH AND STATEHOOD BELIEVERS. THIS NEW GROUP GAVE BOTH THE INDEPENDENTIST PARTIES STRENGTH AND BARBAINING POWER BEFORE THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE OF 24. THEY WERE NO LONGER THE ONLY FORCES IN PUERTO RICO STATING THAT PUERTO RICO IS A COLONY OF THE US, UNDER EITHER RESOLUTION 1514 OR 1541. IT THEREFORE STRENGTHENED THEIR CASE BEFORE THE COMMITTEE.

8. I AM ALSO CONVINCED THAT THIS NEW DEVELOPMENT WHICH OCCURRED AT THE UN IS DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE NEW OPEN DIPLOMACY OF THIS ADMINISTRATION. THE NEW MOOD AT THE UN, THROUGH THE ABLE HANDS OF AMBASSADOR YOUNG, PRESIDENT CARTER'S OPEN DIPLOMACY AND THE NEW OVERALL CHANGE IN US FOREIGN POLICY, ALLOWS AND TOLERATES THIS MOOD OF CAMARADERIE, EXCHANGE OF IDEAS, OPEN DIALOGUE WHICH EXISTS AT THE UN EVEN AMONG PERSONS OF DIFFERENT POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL BELIEFS. ALL FACTIONS PRESENT AT THE UN WERE IN A SPIRIT OF SURPRISE AND TOLERANCE.

9. THE US, THEREFORE, AFTER THE ABOVE REMARKS, FACES A NEW
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POLITICAL PHENOMENON WITH RESPECT TO PUERTO RICO. NO LONGER CAN THE STATE DEPARTMENT SAY THAT ONLY THE INDEPENDENTIST FACTION STATE THAT PUERTO RICO IS A COLONY UNDER EITHER RESOLUTION 1541 OR 1514. NOW WE HAVE TWO NEW POLITICAL FORCES IN PUERTO RICO, THE PDP AUTONOMISTS AND THE ADA, DEMOCRATS FOR STATEHOOD, SAYING EXACTLY THE SAME THING. A COALITION, THEREFORE, HAS BEEN FORMED. THE US, FOR ITS OWN BENEFIT, HAS TO REORGANIZE THE NEW FORCES. FOR THE US TO REMAIN DEFENDING THE PRESENT STATUS QUO WILL DAMAGE US PRESTIGE AND AS FAR AS I AM CONCERNED, WILL PLACE THE US IN A LOSING PROPOSITION.

10. THE US, THEREFORE, SHOULD ACCEPT UN JURISDICTION OVER PUERTO RICO, AND WIN THE FIGHT OVER THE CUBANS THROUGH PROCEDURAL GROUNDS AND NOT SUBSTANTIVE MATTERS, AS TO WHETHER PUERTO RICO IS OR IS NOT A COLONY. IN THIS MANNER THE US WILL WIN PROCEDURALLY; WILL ACCEPT AN ESTABLISHED CONCEPT OF INTERNATIONAL LAW WHICH GIVES THE UN JURISDICTION OVER THIS MATTERS (WE SHOULD NOT TAKE THE POSITION TAKEN YEARS AGO BY BRITAIN AND FRANCE BEFORE THE UN OVER, FOR EXAMPLE, GABON AND ALGERIA) AND UNDERMINE THE CUBAN POSITION, WHICH PRESENTLY IS HIGH AMONG THE THIRD WORLD AND PUERTO RICANS, WITH RESPECT TO PUERTO RICO'S STATUS. ALLOW, THEREFORE, THE COMMITTEE OF 24 TO GO TO PUERTO RICO, DELAY ANY RESOLUTION UNTIL NEXT YEAR AND ACCEPT AHEAD OF TIME A REALITY THAT IS ALREADY OCCURRING-- A CONSENSUS AMONG THE MAJORITY OF PUERTO RICANS THAT THE ISLAND IS A COLONY OF THE US. EVEN THE PRESENT GOVERNOR AND THE RESIDENT COMMISSION IN CONGRESS HAVE PUBLICLY STATED THAT PUERTO RICO HAS "VESTIGES OF COLONIALISM."

11. THE PUERTO RICAN STRUGGLE IS NOW BASICALLY IN PUERTO RICAN HANDS, WHICH NO ONE CAN STOP. IT IS NO LONGER A
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CAUSE EXPOUNDED ONLY BY THE CUBANS AND THE TWO PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENTIST PARTIES. THE US, THEREFORE, IN THE SPIRIT OF THIS NEW ADMINISTRATION, ITS NEW DIPLOMACY AND GOOD POLITICS, SHOULD REDEFINE ITS POSITION TO ITS OWN ADVANTAGE.

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